

1524 SW Birdie Drive
Corvallis, OR 97333
August 30, 1999

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Jane E. Henney, Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 14-71
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Ms. Henney:

Antibiotics have been used to fatten beef, hogs and poultry for many years. Fifty million pounds of antibiotics are produced in the U.S. every year; 40% of that is given to animals and 80% of what is given to animals is used to promote their growth. With thousands of animals crammed into the tight quarters of a typical factory farm operation, antibiotics are dispensed constantly through feed.

Using antibiotics as a feed additive to fatten livestock more quickly is making disease-causing bacteria more resistant to the drugs humans rely upon to treat tuberculosis, pneumonia, staph infections and other life-threatening infectious diseases. Repeated exposure to the drugs enables resistant strains of bacteria to evolve. Physicians are finding an increasing number of cases in which antibiotics are no longer curing diseases. The Institute of Medicine estimated that the annual cost of treating antibiotic-resistant infections in the U.S. is \$30 billion.

The World Health Organization called for a ban on using antibiotics to fatten livestock in 1997. Since then, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Public Health Association and other public health organizations have taken similar positions. Last year, the European Union banned adding human-use antibiotics to animal feed.

Previous efforts to ban antibiotics as feed additives to fatten livestock have failed because of Congressional opposition. This opposition is bolstered by the large campaign contributions of the livestock industry and drug manufacturers. A petition to ban the use of medically useful antibiotics as growth promoters would be an important step in protecting the effectiveness of drugs used to treat human diseases and in stopping industrial-style livestock production.

I urge you to ban antibiotics as livestock growth promoters.

Sincerely,



Sherri Detweiler

99P - 0485

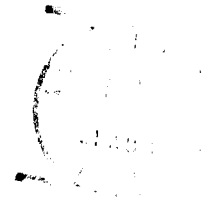
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EXECUTIVE MAT

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